Quran, Imam Ali (a.s.) and Shi'a

Part 1

The Glorious Quran Chapter 2 Verse 207

And among men there is one who selleth his self (soul) seeking the pleasure of God; and verily, God is affectionate unto His (faithful) servants.

It is held unanimious by the Scholars of the two Islamic schools, that this verse was revaled for Imam Ali (as), when he readily slept in the bed of the Prophet (pbuh&f) , when the latter to the will of God had to migrate from Mecca to Medina. The one who would agree to offer himself instead of the Holy Prophet (pbuh&f) who was wanted by the enemy must essentially have

- The safety of the Prophet (pbuh&f) prefered to his own safety
- Implicit faith in the duty of a man to earn the pleasure of the Almighty Allah and His Prophet Muhammad (pbuh&f), at any cost, even at the cost of his own life
- The courage of surrendering himself willingly with the utmost peace of mind, to sleep under the swords, ready to fall upon him
- The confidence and faith in God's protection

And on the night of Hijrah, Allah the glorious revealed to Jibrail and Mikail I have eshtablished brotherhood between you two and have ordained the life of one longer than the life of the other. Now, are you willing to make a present of the extra length of life to the other?

But each prefered the longer life for himself. Then Allah revealed

Why not follow the example of Ali ibn Abu Talib. I have established brotherhood between him and Muhammad (pbuh&f). He is now sleeping on the bed of Muhammad in order to save his life by sacrificing his own. Now descend both of you to the earth and protect him from his enemies.

Both the angels descended. Jibrail took up his position near Ali's head and Mikail near his feet. Jibrail was crying out aloud Excellent. Excellent. O son of Abu Talib! There is none like you. Allah is making boast of you before the angels.

And it was on this very occasion that the above verse was revealed.

- Tafsir al Kabir, by Fakhr ad Din al Razi, v 2 p 189 (for the above narrt)
- Hakim al Mustadrak, v 3 p 4
- Ghayatul Maryam, p 344 -> 345
- Tafseer e Qurtubi, v 3 p 347
- Asadul Ghaiba fe Marifatil As Sahaba, v 4 p 25
- Tafseer Nishapoori (Allama Nishapori) , v 1 p 281
- Kifyatul Talib, p 114
- Zhakhiar al Uqba, p 88
- Noor ul Absar, p 86

Imam Ali (as) composed about this incident (poetry)

I staked my life for the man who was the best of all those
who circumbulated the Ancient House and the Sacred Stone !

Part 2

Glorious Quran Chapter II - Verse 269

He granteth wisdom to whomsoever He willeth, and he who have been granted wisdom hath been given abundant good; and none shall mind it save those endowed with wisdom.

In the above verse the word "*Wisdom*" implies the best knowledge seeking to act with fullness and soundness of one's own conscience. True knowledge is spiritual illumination or divine guidance worked through the grace of God as and when the necessity occurs. This being the active result of the constant seeking for it by those who obtained nearness to the Allmighty!

It is held by many Sunni scholars, that this verse was revealed for Imam Ali (as). It is not surprising that, such a unique gift (of being granted wisdom) is inspiration (*Ilhaam*) which is conferred upon the purified ones.

Sunni references:

- Shawahid al Tanzeel (Allama Haskani), v 1 p 106
- al Bidahiya wan Nihayiah, v 7 p 359 with a tradition from the Holy Prophet (pbuh&f)

Wisdom has been divided into 10 (ten) parts, and 9 (nine) of these are possessed by Ali, and the remaining has been divided among the rest of the people.

- Kanz al Ummal, v 6 p 154
- Asadul Bilagha, v 4 p 22 and v 1 p 22
- Kitabul Sagheer, p 15
- Manaqib Khawarizmi, p 49
- Dhakhair al Uqba, p 78
- Musnad of Ahmed Hanbal, v 1 pages 140 and 185
- Maqtal Hussain, v 1 p 43

Part 3

Glorious Quran Chapter 3 Verse 61

And unto him who disputeth with thee therein after the knowledge hath come unto thee, Say! (O' Our Apostle Muhammad!) (Unto them) come ye, let us summon our sons, and (ye summon) your sons, and (we summon) our women and (ye) your women, and (we summon) ourselves and then let us invoke the curse of God on the liars!

This verse refers to the famous event of ' *Mubahila* ' which took place in the year 10 A.H against the Christians of Najran. A deputation of 60 Christians of Najran headed by Abdul Masih their chief monkpriest came and discussed with the Holy Prophet (pbuh&f) the personality of Hazrat Eesa (as). The Holy Prophet (pbuh&f) told them not to deify Jesus for he was only a mortal created by God, and not God Himself. Then they asked who the father of Jesus was. By this, they thought that since he was born without a father the Holy Prophet (pbuh&f) would helplessly accept Jesus' father being God himself. In reply to this question was revealed the Verse.

Verily, similitude of Jesus with God is as the similitude of Adam; He created him out of dust then said He unto him BE, and he became.

When the Christians did not agree to this line of reasoning, then this verse was revealed enjoining upon the Prophet (pbuh&f) to call the Christians to Mubahila. To this the Christians agreed and they wanted to return to their place and would have the Mubahila the next day.

Early next morning the Holy Prophet (pbuh&f) sent Salman al Farsi (May Allah be well pleased with him) to the open place, fixed outside the city for the historic event, to erect a small shelter for himself and those he intended to take along with him for the contest. On the opposite side appeared the Christian priests, while at the appointed hour the Christians witnessed the Holy Prophet (pbuh&f) entering the field with Imam Hussain (as) in his lap, Imam Hasan (as) holding his finger, and walking beside him, Lady Fatima (as) and followed by Imam Ali al Murtaza (as). The Prophet (as) on reaching the appointed spot stationed himself with his daughter, her two sons and her husband, raising his hands towards the heaven said:
Lord these are the People of my House

The Chief Monk on knowing that the baby in the lap of the Prophet (pbuh&f) was his young grandson, Imam Hussain (as), the child walking holding the Prophet's (pbuh&f) hand was his first grandson, Imam Hasan (as), the Lady behind him was daughter, his only surviving issue was Fatima (as) the mother of the two children and the one who followed the Lady was his son in law, the husband of Fatima (as), addressed the huge crowd of the people who had gathered on the spot, and addressed them saying

By God, I see the faces which, if they pray to God for mountains to move from their places, the mountains will immediately move!

O believers in the Jesus of Nazareth, I will tell you the truth that should ye fail to enter into some agreement with Muhammad and if these souls whom Muhammad has brought with him, curse you, ye will be wiped out of existence to the last day of the life of the earth!

The people readily agreed to the advice counseled by their Leader. They beseeched the Holy Prophet (pbuh&f) to give up the idea of the agreed *Mubahila* and requested for themselves to be allowed to continue their faith, offering to pay ' *Jizya* '.

- Al Tabari, Commentary of the Quran, v 2 p 192 -> 193

This historic event of a unique triumph of Islam is taken by the Shias as a religious thanksgiving festival of the triumph against falsehood. Some of the significance of this event are as follows:

- this event unquestionably establishes the truth about the spiritual purity of the Ahl al Bayt
- it proves beyond any doubt as to who are the members of the house of the Prophet (pbuh&f)
- the seriousness and the solemnity of the occasion demands absolute purity, spiritual as well as physical in the individuals to serve in the fateful occasion for the Holy Prophet to present them to God as the best one of His creation to be heard in the prayers of Truth!

Sunni references

- Ghayatul Maryam, p 300
- Sahih Muslim, v 4 p 1285 (English Edition), the tradition is as follows:

...(The third occasion is this) when the following verse was revealed : Let us summon our children and your children. Allah's messenger (pbuh&f) called Ali, Fatima, Hasan and Hussain and said : O Allah, these are my family ...

Part 4

Glorious Quran Chapter 3 Verse 103

And hold ye fast by the cord of God All together and be not divided (among yourselves) ...

Some Sunni scholars and commentators agree that the above verse reflects on the Ahl al Bayt. Here are some references

- Thalabi records on his Commentary Tafsir al Kabir from Aban ibn Tabligh that he heard Imam Jafer as Sadiq (as) say:

We are the Rope of Allah about whom Allah has said: Hold fast to the Rope of Allah ...

- Shafi'i is reported by Abu Bakr ibn Shabah al Din in Rishfaht al Sadi to have said:

When I saw People carried off
Their departure to the sea of error and ignorance
In the name of Allah I boarded the ship of Salvation
That is the Ahl al Bayt of Mustafa, the Seal of Prophecy
And I caught hold of the Rope of Allah, that is their Love
As He commanded us to hold fast to the Rope!

- A tradition from the Holy prophet (pbuh&f)

I will soon be called away and will have to depart from you, but
I leave among you Two (2) weighty things, the Book of Allah and
my descendants. The Book of Allah is like a rope which extends from
the heavens to the earth, and my descendants are my people of the
house (my Ahl al Bayt). The Subtle and the Aware tells me that
the two (2) shall never part company until they come to me at the
Pool. So take care how you treat them after me.

As recorded in

- Musnad of Ahmed Hanbal, v 3 p 17
- Musnad of Ahmed Hanbal, v 3 p 26
- Sahih of al Tirmizi, tradition no. 874
- Kanz al Ummal, v 1 p 47, tradition no. 945 (for the above hadeeth)
- Ghayatul Maryam, p 242
- Yanibul Muwaddah, p 118 -> 119
- Sawaiq al Muhriqah, v 1 chapter 11
- Safinatul Biharij (Recorded by Allama Qummi from Allama Zamakhsari) p 193.